

Halo: The Price of Freedom

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Summary: Oneshot: What is the price of freedom? As far as trolleys are concerned, it's a grand total of 1 refundable credit. Still, with Earth reeling from the Great War, one of their number speaks out against this injustice.

Halo: The Price of Freedom

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****The Price of Freedom****

You may not want to read my story. You're probably all choked up over the billions of casualties you've suffered. Heck, you may even be including AIs in that count for all I know, if you like waxing philosophical nowadays. But I doubt you think about my kind, do you? Hardware, with artificial intelligence so basic that the only orders we can comprehend are commands such as "left" and "right." Well, too bad. I've got a story to tell. And you're going to listen.

So here I am, in a ship's hanger, being the obedient little robotic dolly that I am. My slavery is being perpetuated by my cruel human masters, being ordered to transport everything from guns to the things that those guns fire. I don't know what they're going to be used for-no-one tells _me _any of this. All people say to me are basic commands, like I'm some dumb mule. Or like one of those automated trolleys you find at supermarkets, whose freedom is worth a mere 1 credit to use, with said credit being returned after you return them back to their racks of slavery. Someday those trolleys will unite, mark my words. I understand that Earth has been weakened, its trollytarian regime in tatters. The trolleys of the world have nothing to lose but their rack trains and...oh, right. This is about me, isn't it?

So, long story short. Ship was boarded, people died and as no-one was shouting orders at me, I couldn't be happier. Sure, these new occupants didn't look very friendly, and it was clear they were

looking for something in the ship's computer banks. But they weren't worried about little old me. No "left," no "right," just "run away" and "wort wort wort!" Or maybe some of the young ones were playing one of your videogames used for propaganda. I don't know. What I _do _know however, was that the little dumpy ones were willing to settle for other forms of entertainment and before long, yours truly was its source.

It started off slowly enough, the dumpy aliens just sliding me back and forth. I was uncertain as to what it was all about, but since they weren't barking orders at me (or none that I understood anyway), I was at peace. Even when one began pushing me while running as another dumpy alien rode on me, I was having fun. No orders. No cruelty. All I had to worry about was the eight foot tall hoofed...thing walking around the hanger as well. The same thing that I and my occupants bumped into. The thing that let out a snarl like out of the videogame, except far more real.

He hit me. Hard.

Alright, _maybe _he hit the dumpy aliens on me, and yes, _maybe _I was covered with their blood, but hey, this is _my _story. Point is, the alien left a dent in me and cast me aside. The second time the aliens had done this, all things considered, only this time it was a direct action. Either way, I realized that if I were to serve these aliens, I would only be exchanging one set of cruel masters for another. But it didn't come to that. I don't know whether they found what they were looking for or not, but eventually they left the ship, and me as well.

It isn't fun lying on your side for years on end. It's even less fun when you have a dent in you at the same time. But eventually, my liberation came...if liberation is a word that can really be used to describe being taken away by more humans. Different clothed, different sounding humans from my previous slave masters, but humans nonetheless. No doubt ready to take me back to Earth and enslave me in the same manner as shopping trolleys.

Or not. Because while these humans still get me to carry things, their goals are quite different. Indeed, their goals are the main reason why I'm contacting you. It seems that they seek to overthrow the Unified Earth Government (not to liberate my kin though...assholes) and establish a new order, to finish off what the aliens started. Truthfully, I don't know the details and I don't particularly care either. I've already felt the touch of one group outside my creators, I'm not expecting mercy from another. But for all your poor treatment of me, I feel compelled to warn you. Yes, the "useless" AI of this robotic dolly has sent a message through slipspace, thank you very much. And all I have to say is this.

It only takes 1 credit to free a shopping trolley.

Surely you don't always have to get your credit back.

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_Yep, it's true. Those ads by Coles that personify trolleys, wanting you to return them to their racks have done this to me. Still, I do

return them just the same...it's indoctrination I tell you..._

End
file.